

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 9-13, 15-22, and 24-32 are presently active in this case, Claims 9-13, 15-18, and 22 having been amended, Claims 14 and 23 having been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, and Claims 27-32 having been added by way of the present Amendment.

In the outstanding Official Action, Claims 9-26 were objected to under 37 CFR 1.75(d). The claims were amended to make the language used therein correspond better to the language used in the specification. For example, Claim 9 now recites a developer container storing powder developer therein comprising a mouth member having a developer outlet from which the developer is discharged, and a shutter member for closing said developer outlet when said shutter member is fitted to said developer outlet, wherein a developer inlet to said mouth member is formed in the direction of gravity, and said developer outlet is formed at an angle to the direction of gravity. The language in Claim 9 and the other claims is consistent with language used in the specification and features depicted in the various drawings showing the present invention. Claims 13 and 22 were amended to indicate that the storing member is provided with a tapered portion and the mouth member is provided at a tip of the tapered portion, which is consistent with the specification on page 9, line 2, and amended page 13, line 21 and the drawings. Additionally, the word "far" has been changed to "for" in Claim 22. Accordingly, the Applicants request the withdrawal of the objection to the claims.

Claims 9-12 and 17-21 were objected to for the above informalities, but were indicated as being allowable if the objections are overcome. The Applicants respectfully submit that the objections have been overcome as discussed above, and therefore Claims 9-12 and 17-21 are believed to be in condition for allowance.

Claims 13, 15, 16, 22, and 24-26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over JP 2002-132028 in view of Yanagisawa et al. (U.S. Patent Pub. No. 2001/0051062). For the reasons discussed below, the Applicants request the withdrawal of the obviousness rejection.

Claims 14 and 23 were indicated as being allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. The subject matter of Claims 14 and 23 have been incorporated into Claims 13 and 22, respectively. Therefore, the Applicants submit that Claims 13 and 22 are in condition for allowance.

Claims 15, 16, and 24-26 are considered allowable for the reasons advanced for Claims 13 and 22 from which they depend. These claims are further considered allowable as they recite other features of the invention that are neither disclosed nor suggested by the applied references when those features are considered within the context of Claims 13 and 22.

Newly added Claims 27-32 are considered allowable as they recite features of the invention that are neither disclosed nor suggested by the references of record. For example, Claims 27 and 28 advantageously recite, among other features, a shutter member that is provided on an outside of a mouth member. Claims 29 and 30 advantageously recite, among other features, a developer inlet to a mouth member that is formed in a direction that is

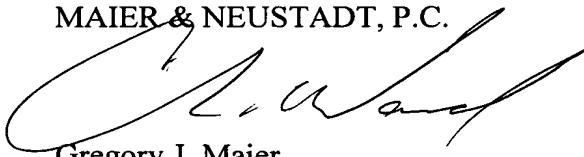
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substantially perpendicular to a direction of a developer outlet. Claims 31 and 32 advantageously recite, among other features, a shutter member that is not provided within a storing member. Such features are not disclosed in the cited references.

Consequently, in view of the above discussion, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for formal allowance and an early and favorable reconsideration of this application is therefore requested.

Respectfully Submitted,

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IN THE DRAWINGS

The attached sheet of drawings includes changes to Fig. 9. This sheet, which includes Fig. 9, replaces the original sheet including Fig. 9.

Attachment: Replacement Sheet